

FORT SUMTER TOUR BOAT SCRIPT

LIBERTY SQUARE DEPARTURE

[Begin the narrative when the last person is on board and while the boat is still tied to the dock]

INTRODUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome aboard the Spirit of Charleston. Please remain seated while we get underway. During our tour we will be docking at Fort Sumter and again back here when we return. For your own safety, please remain seated or maintain a firm handhold when we are approaching and tying up to any dock.

While underway, please feel free to move about, but always maintain a firm handhold, particularly when using the stairways. Keep your arms and hands inside the boat at all times. For your own safety, please be careful.

In case of an emergency, we have life jackets for adults and life jackets for children weighing less than 90 pounds. These jackets are stored on the top deck in overhead racks, on the bottom deck forward in a large storage chest and the afterdeck in storage compartments. All locations are clearly marked. To use a life jacket, first pull the jacket over your head. Then bring the strap around your waist, and fasten it much like the seat belt in your car. Tie the chest straps together just under your chin. In any emergency, always follow the instructions of the crew.

Restrooms are located to the rear on the lower deck, and a snack bar is just behind the wheelhouse on the upper deck.

The National Park Service and Fort Sumter Tours are committed to the preservation and conservation of Fort Sumter National Monument and the surrounding environment. We're particularly concerned to protect the sensitive ecosystem of Charleston Harbor and to prevent its pollution. Therefore we ask you to please use the trash containers provided on the first and second decks. Remember that throwing any trash overboard is a violation of federal law. For your convenience we've also provided blue recycling containers on both decks. Please use these for all of your aluminum cans and plastic bottles. Help us reduce waste and protect our environment by recycling. For the convenience of all our guests, smoking is prohibited aboard all Fort Sumter Tours vessels.

ASHLEY & COOPER RIVERS / FOUNDING OF CHARLESTON

The old City of Charleston is located on a peninsula bounded on the east by the Cooper River and on the west by the Ashley River. We are now in the Cooper River heading east towards Fort Sumter and the Atlantic Ocean. The English named the two rivers in honor of one man: Lord Anthony Ashley

Cooper, the Earl of Shaftsbury and an English Lord Proprietor of the Carolinas. In April 1670, after a difficult seven-month voyage, a small ship named *Carolina* with 93 English settlers aboard sailed past the lower Charleston peninsula before landing upstream on the Ashley River to settle the Province of Carolina. The original site was called Albemarle Point. But the settlers at Albemarle could not defend themselves from their enemies, which included the Spanish, the French and Native Americans. Their search for more defensible terrain led them to the peninsula in 1680. Just over 100 years later in 1783 the City of Charleston was incorporated.

CHARLESTON

Charleston in the 18th and 19th century became a major shipping port, and as the largest city in the south was the region's center of wealth and culture. The foundation of the economy was the slave labor-based plantation system that produced rice, indigo and sea island cotton, principally for markets in England and the West Indies. For over a century, a variety of rice known as "Carolina Gold" was the major crop in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Enslaved West Africans made this possible through their knowledge and skills of rice production. Out of this system a small group of wealthy planters and merchants emerged who enjoyed beautiful homes in the city and plantations in the countryside, making Charleston one of the richest cities in the New World.

PIRATES/CHARLESTON BATTERY

In the early 1700s, pirates were a constant threat to shipping along the South Carolina coast. The most feared of all were Captain Edward Teach, better known as "Blackbeard," and Captain Stede Bonnet. Hardly a ship left the Port of Charleston that didn't have difficulty with these cutthroat pirates. Finally the local citizens led by William Rhett captured Stede Bonnet. One of the earliest historic events to occur on the point of the battery where the trees are located was the hanging of Captain Bonnet and his men in 1718. Documents record that Bonnet was buried in the marsh near the water's edge in accordance with his last request. It is believed that this spot is now enclosed by the battery sea wall.

The battery came by its name because of the guns placed along the wall during the War of 1812. A battery is defined as a group of guns working together as a unit. The park, White Point Gardens, contains a number of monuments, most of which commemorate military engagements and personalities. The largest of these is the Fort Sumter Memorial, erected in honor of the Confederate defenders of Fort Sumter.

JAMES ISLAND

The land straight ahead is James Island. In April 1780, nearly four years after a British defeat off Sullivan's Island, Sir Henry Clinton landed British troops that marched across James Island and laid siege to Charleston. The British forced the city to surrender and occupied it until December 1782.

Several Civil War battles were fought on James Island, including the Battle of Secessionville. In May of 1862 a slave named Robert Smalls commandeered a boat named the *Planter*, loaded with Confederate equipment. Smalls sailed the *Planter* past Fort Sumter to the Union warships forming a naval blockade. Information Smalls provided to Federal forces led to the battle of Secessionville in

June. This was the largest land battle fought in South Carolina during the war. Robert Smalls served as a Union Navy ship's pilot for the remainder of the war and later became a U.S. Congressman.

FORT JOHNSON

Ahead and to the left on James Island is the site of Fort Johnson, where the British built the first fortification in 1708 and named it for Sir Nathaniel Johnson, governor of the Carolinas. Before the Revolutionary War the fort was improved and enlarged, and then replaced with a new fort in 1793. But as a result of several severe storms, by 1827 little remained of the third fort. After South Carolina's secession in December 1860, South Carolina Militia returned to the site and built a new Fort Johnson. The first shots of the Civil War were fired from here onto Fort Sumter at 4:30 AM April 12, 1861. Today there are modern structures on the site. Only a 19th century powder magazine and a few earthworks remain.

FORT SUMTER

In front of us is the entrance to Charleston Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Ahead of us is Fort Sumter, a powerful symbol of one of the greatest challenges this country ever faced. One of many forts constructed along the Atlantic coast by the federal government, Fort Sumter's purpose was to defend Charleston from foreign invasion. In reality, the fort would be the flashpoint in a war between Americans where the nature of the Union and the meaning of freedom would be changed forever.

In 1829 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began to build Fort Sumter on a shoal, or submerged sandbar, in Charleston Harbor. The island itself was constructed of 70,000 tons of granite and other rock brought by sea from New England. By 1860, thirty-one years later, Fort Sumter was 90% complete. But while the fort was being built, a divisive sectionalism was growing in the country.

The years leading up to the opening shots of the Civil War were marked by a series of escalating crises and hard-fought compromises. From arguments at the 1787 Constitutional Convention about closing the international slave trade in 1808, to the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and the Nullification of 1832, the political battles centered on protecting regional economic interests. The Compromise of 1850 with its more restrictive Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 that resulted in "Bleeding Kansas," the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision, and John Brown's 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry were among the complex string of incidents that haunted the country.

Underlying all the economic, political and social arguments was the issue of slavery. Should slavery be allowed in the new western territories? Shouldn't slaveholders be allowed to take their human property into new states, just as they had taken them into Ohio or New York? If the federal government could outlaw slavery in the new territories, couldn't the federal government also outlaw it in Southern states where it formed the basis of the economy? What about states' rights and dearly valued individual property rights? Southerners argued that the Constitutional compact guaranteed slavery. Political and religious leaders played on racial fears to win support from non-slaveholding whites. As the abolitionist movement grew in popularity, southerners feared that their way of life was being threatened.

In November 1860 the presidential election of Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln without a single electoral vote from the South signaled that secession was imminent in South Carolina. The Republican Party stood for non-expansion of slavery, not for its abolition. Southerners who advocated States' Rights saw this as a serious threat to their standard of living. South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union on December 20, 1860. The Secession Convention's vote was unanimous. Soon five more states followed: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana.

At the time, there were four United States fortifications in the Charleston area: Fort Johnson, Fort Sumter, Castle Pinckney, and Fort Moultrie. Of the four only Fort Moultrie was garrisoned, with 85 officers and enlisted men commanded by Major Robert Anderson. But the fort was in need of major repairs, and Anderson considered it indefensible.

Under the cover of darkness on the night of December 26, 1860, Major Anderson moved his garrison from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter. Fort Sumter was the safest and most defensible position he could hold against attack with his limited number of men and supplies. Charlestonians were outraged and within a few days, South Carolina militia had seized all federal property in the area except Fort Sumter.

Meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, in February 1861, the six seceded states formed the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis was elected as President of the newly formed nation. Almost all federal property including arsenals, forts, and navy yards within the seceded states were seized by state authorities. Texas was the seventh state to secede and was admitted into the Confederacy in March 1861. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina would secede after the Civil War began.

Though incomplete, Fort Sumter was still an impressive fortification. The pentagon-shaped building had five-foot thick walls that towered more than 50 feet above the water at low tide. Although Fort Sumter may have been the best location for Major Anderson and his men, the fort's defenses could only offer token resistance. Of the 135 guns planned for the fort, only 15 were mounted. On the parade ground lay 66 cannon barrels, gun carriages, and 5,600 shot and shell. For the next three months Anderson and his command prepared Fort Sumter for combat. But by April 12, a total of only 60 cannon stood ready.

While the Federals strengthened their defenses, Confederate forces could be seen building batteries and mounting cannon along the harbor's shoreline. Forty-three southern cannon were trained on Fort Sumter and more than 3,500 Confederate soldiers manned Charleston Harbor defenses.

By early April the Federals were nearly out of food, and would soon be starved into surrender if not re-supplied. President Lincoln ordered the navy to sail for Charleston and attempt to re-supply Major Anderson with provisions and additional troops. The Confederate government in Montgomery, Alabama, aware of the expedition, debated a course of action. They decided not to permit the re-supplying of Fort Sumter.

Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard was ordered to demand the fort's evacuation and to take Fort Sumter by force if Anderson refused. On the afternoon of April 11, 1861, Anderson received the ultimatum from Beauregard. Major Anderson refused, stating that his garrison would be starved out by April 15th. But with Union supply ships expected at any moment, the reply was considered

unacceptable. Major Anderson was informed that Confederate forces would soon open fire on Fort Sumter.

At 4:30 A.M., on April 12, 1861, with the first Union supply ships at the Charleston Harbor's entrance, a mortar shell was fired from Fort Johnson. It exploded directly over Fort Sumter, signaling all Confederate guns bearing on the fort to open fire. The American Civil War had begun.

The bombardment of Fort Sumter lasted 34 hours, with the Confederates firing more than 3,000 projectiles at the fort. Anderson had just 85 soldiers who had to work the guns in shifts, meaning only 9 or 10 of his 60 guns could even return fire. During the second day of the battle, artillery fire from Moultrie set his officers' quarters and enlisted men's barracks on fire. With so few men, Anderson could not fight the fire and the Confederates at the same time. On that afternoon arrangements were made for Anderson to surrender the fort.

On April 14, 1861, Confederate forces occupied Sumter, allowing Anderson and his men to withdraw to New York aboard a Union supply ship. For the South, Fort Sumter was sacred ground where the first shot in the war for southern independence was fired. For the North, it was the place where secession and disloyalty to the Union had escalated into armed rebellion.

For the next two years, as great battles were being fought in Virginia and Tennessee, Charleston Harbor remained relatively quiet. But just outside the harbor, U.S. Navy ships had formed a blockade to keep southern cargo vessels from using Charleston's port.

But on April 7, 1863, the war returned when nine federal gunboats attacked Forts Sumter and Moultrie. After 2 ½ hours the artillery duel was over, leaving the Federals defeated.

Realizing a greater effort would be required to seize Charleston, Northern troops advanced on Morris Island, located beyond Fort Sumter on the south side of the harbor's entrance. On July 18, 1863, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment led an assault against Battery Wagner. This was one of the first African American units to see action in the United States military. The assault on Battery Wagner was featured in the film *Glory*. In early September 1863, after nearly two and a half months of federal bombardment, Southern forces abandoned Morris Island. The Union then used the island as a base to bombard Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie, and Charleston with their newer and more powerful rifled artillery.

Over the course of the next 20 months, an estimated seven million pounds of artillery projectiles, about 44,000 in all, were fired at Fort Sumter. This tremendous effort to destroy the fort proved unsuccessful. Even though the top two levels were reduced to rubble, Confederate forces defiantly held Fort Sumter. During the siege Confederate soldiers and slaves used sandbags, cotton bales, timbers and brick rubble to strengthen the fort's walls. This was the longest siege of the Civil War, and among the longest anywhere in modern warfare.

Finally, on February 17, 1865, Confederate forces evacuated Fort Sumter. General William T. Sherman's Union army, marching from Savannah, Georgia to Columbia, South Carolina, cut off Charleston's communications and supply routes, forcing the Confederate troops to abandon the area.

With the return of United States troops to Fort Sumter, work began to repair the battered brick

structure. A small percentage of the fort was rebuilt and other sections repaired, mostly during the 1870s. Today most of the visible brickwork is original.

From 1876 to 1897 Fort Sumter was not garrisoned, and primarily served as a lighthouse station. But the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 brought new life to the fort. The army constructed Battery Huger in the middle of Fort Sumter as part of the overall upgrade of U.S. coastal defenses. Used through World War I and World War II, this reinforced concrete battery still dominates the fort's interior.

By the end of World War II, technological advances made static seacoast defense systems obsolete. And in 1947, after 87 years service, Fort Sumter was deactivated, and later became Fort Sumter National Monument, part of the National Park System.

SAFETY

[Begin when approaching the Fort Sumter dock.]

On behalf of the National Park Service, welcome to Fort Sumter. A National Park Service Ranger will meet you on the dock and assist you during your visit. Inside the fort are a museum and several outdoor exhibits.

As we prepare to dock, please be seated or maintain a firm handhold until we're safely tied to the dock and will announce when it is safe to leave the boat.

Remember that Fort Sumter was built as a military installation and not as a public attraction; so special safety precautions must be observed.

Please keep all children under adult supervision. Adult leaders must assume responsibility for the safety of school and scout groups and remain with them at all times.

Please keep all personal belongings with you at all times, including strollers. If you notice any unattended packages or strollers, please notify a park employee immediately.

Climbing is not allowed in any part of the fort, especially on brickwork, cannons and the grassy hill. Federal law prohibits removing or disturbing bricks or any historic items.

Rails and chain barriers have been constructed for your protection and should not be crossed for any reason. Beyond these barriers are fragile historic resources and drops of up to 30 feet.

Smoking is not permitted in the fort, but a designated smoking area is located just outside the main entrance.

Watch your step and hold on to the handrails of the gangplank as you leave the boat. Have a safe and enjoyable visit.

WELCOME BACK ABOARD/FORT MOULTRIE

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back aboard. Across the channel from Fort Sumter is Sullivan's Island. The large brick structure with the American flag flying above is historic Fort Moultrie.

In March of 1776, four months before the Declaration of Independence was issued on July 4th, South Carolinians declared their independence from England and formed their own government. With many of the colonies engaging in rebellious activities, South Carolina expected a British attack on Charleston. An unnamed fort made of palmetto logs and sand was built near the water's edge on Sullivan's Island to protect the harbor from hostile ships. The fort was under the command of Colonel William Moultrie. On June 28, 1776, Moultrie's troops successfully repelled a naval assault of nine British warships under the command of Admiral Sir Peter Parker. Shot from the British fleet harmlessly buried itself in the spongy palmetto logs and sand, while Moultrie's men poured devastating fire into the attacking ships. The loss to the British fleet was heavy. This battle was the first complete and decisive victory over the British in the American Revolution. Charleston was saved from British occupation for four more years, and the fort was named Fort Moultrie in honor of its commander.

When Colonel Moultrie needed a flag to represent his troops in battle, he designed one after his regiment's uniform: a blue flag with a white crescent in the upper left-hand corner. When South Carolina adopted the first and only official state flag in 1861, Moultrie's flag design was used with the addition of a white palmetto tree in the center. Because of the significance of the palmetto during the Battle of Fort Moultrie, South Carolina is known as the "Palmetto State."

In all there have been three forts built on this site, all named Moultrie. The current Fort Moultrie was built of brick in 1809, and was active until 1947.

Today Fort Moultrie is part of Fort Sumter National Monument. It's open to the public year round and is accessible by car. Exhibits there interpret 171 years of American seacoast defenses.

Sullivan's Island is also the location where tens of thousands of enslaved Africans were first brought into this country. For over 90 years, captains of all vessels entering Charleston were required to certify that everyone aboard their ship were free from disease and illness. If the captain could not provide adequate assurance of his ship's health, everyone aboard would spend several weeks in quarantine at "pest," or "pestilence houses" before being allowed into the city. Today a historic marker on Sullivan's Island near Fort Moultrie recognizes the island as a gateway for thousands of enslaved Africans brought to the United States.

MT. PLEASANT / CHARLES PINCKNEY

To the right is the town of Mt. Pleasant. The earliest inhabitants of this area were a Native American people known as the Sewee. The first encounter with the Sewee came in March of 1670 by Nicholas Carteret who was an Englishman aboard the *Carolina* that settled Charles Towne. Sewee means island people; they resided on a thirty-mile section of land stretching from Charleston's harbor to the Santee River. And as well as hunting and fishing the Sewee was an agrarian tribe that planted crops such as maize or corn, melons, peas, beans, and gourds around their villages. The existence of the tribe would be short lived after the European's arrival. The four main factors that would lead to their extinction

were disease, slavery, liquors, and war. In particular, the Yemassee War (1715 – 1719) fought between the colonists and Native Americans led to the virtual extinction of many small coastal tribes including the Sewee. Those who survived the war joined larger tribes such as the Cherokee and the Catawba, the two largest tribes in the state of South Carolina. All that remains today of these tribes are the names that have been given to islands, towns, and rivers throughout the Lowcountry.

Mt. Pleasant is also the home of another National Park site. Charles Pinckney National Historic Site commemorates the contributions of Charles Pinckney in the development of the United States Constitution. Located on what remains of Snee Farm, one of Pinckney's seven plantations, the National Park Service interprets the development of the Constitution, the United States as a young nation, and Charles Pinckney's Lowcountry of 200 years ago. This includes contributions and influences to the development of the United States by many West African cultures, known collectively in the area as "Gullah." An example of this culture is the craft of making Sweetgrass baskets, which has survived in Mt. Pleasant for over three centuries. During President George Washington's tour of the South, he visited Charleston in the spring of 1791. And one of his stops included breakfast at Governor Pinckney's Snee Farm.

CASTLE PINCKNEY

The small island coming into view on our left is Shute's Folly Island. Castle Pinckney is the name of the brick fort on the island. It's named in honor of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, an author and signer of the United States Constitution, and cousin of Charles Pinckney of Snee Farm. The first fortification on Shute's Folly Island was erected in 1798. It played no active role until 1860. In December of that year, it was virtually undefended. But Major Anderson's move from Fort Moultrie across the channel to Fort Sumter was viewed by many as an act of war, and greatly upset Charlestonians. In retaliation the next day, December 27, 1860, approximately 150 South Carolina troops captured Castle Pinckney without incident. Maintained throughout the war, it played a minor role in the defenses of Charleston Harbor. It briefly served as a prison for Union soldiers captured at Manassas in 1861.

CHURCHES & STEEPLES

Charleston is often called the "Holy City" because of the many church steeples that dominate her skyline. The tall white steeple is St. Michael's Episcopal Church, an 18th century Colonial Georgian building designed by Samuel Cardy. The steeple is 186 feet high, and was used as an observation post during the Revolutionary War, a signal station during the Civil War, and an air raid siren station in World War II. George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette and Robert E. Lee attended services here. Buried in St. Michael's Churchyard are two signers of the United States Constitution, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and John Rutledge.

The brown steeple is St. Philips, another historic Episcopal church built in the 1830s. The original St. Philips was located at the current site of St. Michaels. Several prominent American statesmen are buried in this churchyard including Colonel William Rhett, Edward Rutledge, Charles Pinckney and John C. Calhoun, a former U. S. Senator and Vice President of the United States.

THE CHARLESTON MUSEUM

Charleston is also a city of “firsts.” Among them is America’s first and oldest museum, founded in 1773. Located just across Meeting Street from the City Visitor Center, The Charleston Museum features a rich range of exhibits regarding the Lowcountry heritage including *City Under Siege: Charleston in the War Between the States*. You may also wish to visit the Museum’s National Historic Landmark houses. Built on Church Street in 1772, the Heyward-Washington House was owned by Thomas Heyward, Jr., a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and was President George Washington’s local residence during his 1791 Southern Tour. The Joseph Manigault House, built in 1803, was home to one of Charleston’s leading families. Located near the Museum at the corner of John and Meeting Streets, this beautiful Adam-style town-house reflects the wealth and urban lifestyle of a 19th century rice planter.

PATRIOTS POINT

Visible to the right, is the Aircraft Carrier *Yorktown*, the famous “Fighting Lady” of World War II. This *Yorktown*, CV10, was named in honor of the first *Yorktown*, CV5, which was sunk in June 1942 during the Battle of Midway. The *Yorktown* was involved in extensive fighting in the Pacific against the Japanese. Her crew earned eleven battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation. Her last official mission was the recovery of the Apollo 8 space capsule and its crew, the first manned mission to circle the moon in 1968. Among other exhibits, a Congressional Medal of Honor Museum is located on board the *Yorktown* today. The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action that this nation awards to those who serve in its defense. The *Yorktown* and other vessels are now on public display at Patriots Point, one of the largest naval and maritime museums in the world.

COOPER RIVER BRIDGE

The structure to our right is the Arthur Ravenel, Jr. Bridge. Opened to traffic in July 2005, the bridge is the third to cross the Cooper River between Charleston and Mount Pleasant. The first bridge opened in 1929 as a private toll bridge and competed with the ferries that crossed the harbor. The concrete of the first two bridges is becoming part of the artificial reef system built off the coast of South Carolina.

The Ravenel Bridge is North America’s longest cable-stayed bridge. Its two 570-foot tall diamond towers are more than fifteen hundred feet apart. More than 30,000 truckloads of concrete were required to build this bridge, which cost more than half a billion dollars to construct. Built to last one-hundred years, this bridge will grace the Charleston skyline through the 21st century.

PORTS AUTHORITY

The Port of Charleston ranks as the fourth largest container port in the United States, and the second largest on the East Coast. It offers ocean service to and from 140 countries. The major commodities handled by the port include paper products, wood pulp, chemicals, automobiles, heavy machinery, foodstuffs, iron, and steel and plastics.

State Ports Authority terminals move over 13 million tons of cargo on or off more than 2,300 ships and barges annually. Every day the port handles \$79 million in cargo. International trade through Port

Authority facilities funds over 80,000 jobs across the state. This activity generates over \$10 billion in sales for the state economy every year. And Charleston is only one of a handful of ports to receive the Presidential “E” Star award for excellence in exporting.

SOUTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM/LIBERTY SQUARE

Located next door to the Fort Sumter Visitor Education Center is the South Carolina Aquarium featuring thousands of amazing aquatic animals from sharks, moray eels, loggerhead turtles to playful river otters. There's no place in Charleston like it where fun, wonder and education come together in one unforgettable experience. The new Secrets of the Amazon exhibit features creatures like the frightening piranha, electric eels, poison dart frogs and an anaconda, known as one of the world's largest snakes. Come see for yourself why the Aquarium is Charleston's most visited attraction.

Liberty Square, part of the National Park Service facility here, is a place where you can contemplate the struggles of people from all walks of life to secure liberty for the United States. Over the last 200 years, many have made sacrifices so that we may enjoy the liberty that we have today. While you walk through Liberty Square, read the many quotations reflecting on the meanings of liberty and think about what liberty means to you.

DOCKING AT LIBERTY SQUARE

[Approaching the dock]

Soon we'll be docking, and for your own safety, we again ask that you remain seated or maintain a firm handhold. We'll advise you when it is safe to leave. We hope you've enjoyed your visit to Fort Sumter.

-END OF NARRATION-